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# School Programs Commodity Update

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## Business Process Redesign (BPR) of the Food Distribution Program

### What is BPR?

**U**SDA has launched an unprecedented initiative to transform the commodity distribution programs.

We have joined with our customers (schools, Indian reservations, and feeding sites) and our partners (ACDA, ASFSA and industry) to reinvent the programs so they are streamlined and cost-effective, use staff in an efficient manner, and provide radically improved customer service. Transformation teams made up of customer and partner representatives will be led by professionals who have extensive experience in leading change.

This project is being overseen by the Commodity Improvement Council, which is made up of Under Secretaries Shirley Watkins, Mike Dunn, Gus Schumacher and Catherine Woteki, Martha Hill, the President of ASFSA, and Rick Gresser, the President of ACDA.

A BPR web site has been developed to keep you up to date on this transformation project. The site has historical information on how the project evolved, a description of the teams and their most current status reports, and frequently asked questions and answers. It will be updated on a regular basis. This site will soon be able to accept

your questions and comments for consideration by the teams. The address is <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/fd2000/fd2000.htm>. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you as we move forward on this historic project!

Listed below are the BPR teams that have been formed and their members.



### **Commodity Ordering Reinvention (CORE) Team**

This CORE Team is directed to significantly improve service to our customers. The Team met for the first time in December and again this month to set parameters for the other teams to ensure that the overall system is workable and provides enhanced value to the stakeholders. The team members are: Barry Sackin, ASFSA; Paula Cockwell, Colorado School Food Service Director; Gail Johnson, School Food Service Director Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Peggy Cantfil, USDA-FNS; Dean Jensen, USDA-FSA; Howard Magwire, USDA-AMS; Jean Harris, Industry; Karen Dean, USDA-Southeast Regional Office; and Rick Gresser,

President, ACDA. The consultant facilitating this team is Jeff Edwards.

### **The Commodity Hold/Recall Team (CHART)**

**T**his team met for the first time this month. This team's mission is to find a better way to perform recalls and holds when we have a food safety or quality problem with commodities. Members of this team are: Jim Harmon, FNS-Mid - Atlantic Regional Office; Tim Reaman, USDA-FSA; Jeff Curry, USDA-AMS; Jesse Majkowski, USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service; Willie Bryant, Food and Drug Administration; Dwight Ricker, USDA-FNS; Sandra Fisher, Maryland State agency; and Don Trumble, School Lunch Director in Washington County Maryland. The consultant facilitating this team is Pepe Portuondo.

### **Trailblazers for New-Triton (TNT): FDPIR 2000 Team**

Also, a team has been formed to deal with issues related to improving the health and well-being of program participants in the FDPIR.

### **Specification Review Project**

The Specification Review Project has been absorbed into the BPR of the commodity distribution programs. During the specification review project, meetings were held to discuss commodity specifications for cheese, peanut butter, and ground beef/pork. Issues addressed in these meetings will be incorporated into the BPR process. No additional specification review meetings will be held.

### **Bonus Products**

**Beef Pot Roast** - AMS has purchased 25 trucks of bonus cooked beef pot roast for field testing. The product is being delivered from November 1998 through January 1999. This product is under consideration as a possible SOC item against school entitlement. We will be sending out acceptability reports on the product to find out how recipients like it.

**Freestone Peaches and Shelled Walnuts** - USDA will purchase frozen freestone peaches and shelled walnuts under surplus removal authority as a bonus for distribution to schools and emergency food assistance programs. Delivery periods will be January through April 1999.

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### **National School Lunch Program Recovery and Gleaning Cooperative Agreements**

The school districts' second quarter progress reports on the cooperative agreements between USDA and participating schools are being reviewed. The schools are doing a good job of developing partnerships with needy agencies, making the public aware of the need to feed the hungry and utilizing the money approved for this grant to the fullest extent.



### **Browse New Items on FDP's Web site**

The Food Distribution Program's web site is growing, especially with items about the school programs. Check our web site

regularly to see what's happening. Our address is: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd>.



## Nutrition Corner

### Frozen Mozzarella Cheese Is Easy to Handle Properly

Because we continue to receive some concerns on the handling, thawing, and baking of frozen mozzarella cheese, we have included some handy tips.

The proper **thawing of frozen mozzarella cheese**, both regular and lite, is critical to ensure an acceptable melt.

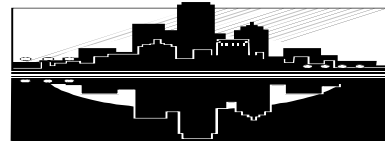
- Thaw the cheese under refrigeration for three days (72 hours) at 35-45° F.
- Keep a 2-3 days usage thawed ahead of time so that using frozen cheese is not necessary.
- Use a thawing rotation system (first thawed, first used) to ensure using cheese in the order in which it was thawed.
- Once thawed, cheese should be used within 7-10 days.
- Keep thawed cheese well wrapped at 35° F.
- If the cheese feels wet, it is not completely thawed: do not use it. Replace in refrigerator to complete thawing process.

To ensure a satisfactory **melt** requires certain parameters.

- Thawed cheese should be heated, in a preheated oven, for 10 minutes at 450° F.

- **Do not heat if cheese is not thawed:** it may stick together, scorch (brown excessively), or not melt at all if it is heated at too high a temperature, or for too long a time period.
- When using thawed mozzarella on pizza, have another topping on top of it, rather than placing the cheese on top.

Problems, as always, should be reported to your State agency or the **USDA Commodity Complaint Hotline 1-800-446-6991**. Be sure to hold the product in question for further examination and evaluation.



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*Prepared by the Program Support Team in conjunction with the Schools and Institutions Branch, USDA, FNS, FDD*